

**National EPA-Tribal Science Council (TSC)
Conference Call Roll Call and Key Discussion Points
Monday, January 31, 2022
2:00–3:30 p.m. EST**

Roll Call

Tribal Caucus

- ☐ Region 1: William (Billy) Longfellow
(Passamaquoddy at Sipayik)
- ☐ Region 1 *Alternate*: Trevor White
(Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township)
- ☒ Region 2: Neil Patterson, Jr. (Tuscarora Nation),
Chair
- ☒ Region 3: Dana Adkins, Chickahominy Indian
Tribe
- ☒ Region 4: Katie Tiger (Eastern Band of
Cherokee Indians)
- ☐ Region 4 *Alternate*: Jerry Cain (Mississippi
Band of Choctaw Indians)
- ☒ Region 5: Scott Walz (Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community)
- ☒ Region 6: Craig Kreman (Quapaw Nation)
- ☒ Region 6 *Alternate*: Tammy Belone (Pueblo of
Jemez)
- ☒ Region 7: Page Hingst (Santee Sioux Nation of
Nebraska), Vice Chair
- ☒ Region 7 *Alternate*: Misha Mazurkewycz (Ponca
Tribe of Nebraska)
- ☐ Region 8: Joshua Tweeton (Spirit Lake Tribe)
- ☐ Region 8 *Alternate*: Allyson Two Bears
(Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)
- ☒ Region 9: Shasta Gaughen (Pala Band of
Mission Indians)
- ☐ Region 9 *Alternate*: Crystal Robinson (Quartz
Valley Indian Reservation)
- ☐ Region 10: Lee Juan Tyler (Shoshone Bannock
Tribes)
- ☐ Region 10 *Alternate*: Kelly Wright (Shoshone
Bannock Tribes)
- ☐ Region 10 (Alaska): Vacant

Support Personnel

- ☒ Monica Rodia, TSC Executive Secretary
- ☒ Hari Karne, EPA ORD/ORAU Student
Contractor
- ☒ Tammy Korolnek, Support Contractor (SCG)
- ☐ Kristen LeBaron, Support Contractor (SCG)

EPA Caucus

- ☐ Region 1: Luke Hullinger
- ☒ Region 2: Kai Tang
- ☒ Region 3: Regina Poeske
- ☐ Region 4: Dawn Taylor
- ☒ Region 5: Janette Marsh
- ☒ Region 5 *Alternate*: Mari Nord
- ☒ Region 6: Alexa Olson
- ☒ Region 7: Eliodora Chamberlain
- ☒ Region 7 *Alternate*: Stanley Holder
- ☒ Region 8: Billy Bunch
- ☒ Region 8 *Alternate*: Jason Deardorff
- ☐ Region 8 *Alternate*: Dale Roy
- ☐ Region 9: Rebecca Jamison
- ☐ Region 9 *Alternate*: Danielle Huang
- ☐ Region 10: Vacant
- ☐ AIEO: Francine St. Denis
- ☒ OAR: Amanda Kaufman
- ☒ OCHP: Ted Coopwood
- ☒ OCSPP: Karen Hamernik
- ☐ OCSPP *Alternate*: Amanda Hauff
- ☐ OLEM: David Charters
- ☒ OMS: Beth Jackson
- ☒ ORD (Chair): Brenda Rashleigh
- ☐ ORD (Liaison): Tim Canfield
- ☐ OW: Karen Gude

Speakers and Invited Guests

- ☒ Valerie Blank, EPA OSAPE
- ☒ Ken Davidson, EPA Region 9
- ☒ Kacee Deener, EPA OSAPE
- ☒ Stiven Foster, EPA OLEM
- ☒ Toney Ott, EPA Region 8
- ☒ Mary Ross, EPA OSAPE

Action Items

1. TSC members will read the monthly teleconference minutes to ensure that they are aware of current activities, news and action items.
2. TSC members with ideas for articles or news items of tribal interest for the spring issue of the *EPA Tribal Science Bulletin* will send them to Monica Rodia and Brenda Rashleigh.
3. Monica will distribute to the TSC members the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) report on the tribal listening sessions that the ACHP held in response to the “America the Beautiful” Initiative.
4. Monica will send the TSC members the TSC’s 2011 white papers on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and climate change.

Key Discussion Points

Roll Call and Distribution of Meeting Minutes

- Monica took the roll and announced that the TSC December monthly call minutes had been finalized and distributed.
- TSC members will read the minutes each month to ensure that they are aware of current activities, news and action items.

Caucus Report Outs

- Brenda reported that during its recent meeting, the EPA Caucus had discussed the spring edition of the *EPA Tribal Science Bulletin*. TSC members with ideas for articles or news items of tribal interest will send them to Monica and Brenda. The EPA Caucus also discussed the ongoing Indigenous research protocols effort, which was originally initiated by Neil Patterson. Shasta Gaughen and José Zambrana launched a complementary effort in Region 9. The TSC, led by the EPA Representatives, will develop a companion guide for EPA researchers within the Office of Research and Development (ORD) who would like to collaborate with tribes. The EPA Representatives also appreciate all of the tribal vignettes that the Tribal Representatives have been presenting.
- Page Hingst reported that during its recent meeting, the Tribal Caucus discussed a letter from ACHP summarizing the results of recent tribal listening sessions about the “America the Beautiful” Initiative, which Shasta will present on. The members also discussed the recent [White House memorandum committing to elevating Indigenous TEK in federal scientific and policy processes](#). The TSC previously identified [TEK as a National Tribal Science Priority](#). During the Tribal Caucus call, Neil mentioned that he would like to harness the TSC’s Indigenous research protocol efforts to ensure that tribes have protocols in place in response to the demand for TEK in federal processes, perhaps through a TSC meta-analysis about TEK as it pertains to environmental decision-making. Finally, Dana Adkins had mentioned that his tribe is particularly concerned about PFAS; Page and Scott Walz are involved with the Tribal PFAS Working Group.

EPA’s Draft Lead Strategy Overview, Stiven Foster, EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management, and Ken Davidson, EPA Region 9

- On October 28, 2021, EPA released the draft [Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities](#) (Lead Strategy) for public comment; the public comment period ends on March 16.

- EPA is hosting a national virtual public comment session for tribes on March 7 at 3:00 p.m. EST. Each regional office also is hosting sessions from early February through early March. These sessions give the public the opportunity to provide input on the draft Lead Strategy.
- The draft Lead Strategy details EPA and government-wide approaches to strengthen public health protections, address legacy lead contamination for communities with the greatest exposures, and promote environmental justice.
- The draft Lead Strategy identifies four goals to (1) reduce community exposures to lead sources, (2) identify lead-exposed communities and improve their health outcomes, (3) communicate more effectively with stakeholders, and (4) support and conduct critical research to inform efforts to reduce lead exposures and related health risks.
- Through the Lead Strategy, EPA is committed to take action to address key problems that contribute to lead exposure in communities. Lead exposure is a priority to EPA because ongoing exposures to lead present a health risk to too many individuals in the United States, and even very low levels of lead in children's blood have been linked to adverse effects on intellect, concentration and academic achievement.
- Although the United States has made substantial progress in reducing lead exposure, significant disparities remain along racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines. EPA developed the Lead Strategy to focus on eliminating these disparities and taking action to prevent childhood exposures.
- The input received from the listening sessions will help the Agency develop a final Lead Strategy that reflects the input and priorities of the people whom it is intended to benefit. EPA is asking for people to describe in their own words what actions will help address lead in their communities, and it will be most helpful if people can provide specific suggestions on how the draft Lead Strategy can be improved.
- Tribes are encouraged to [register for the tribal listening session](#) that is being held on March 7. Tribes also are encouraged to attend the [regional sessions](#). Registered participants may sign up to provide 3-minute verbal comments during the listening sessions. More in-depth comments may be [submitted in writing](#).
- Shasta recommended providing additional opportunities for tribal input, including at Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) meetings. Stiven Foster responded that EPA is committed to extend the public comment period if there is interest. Ken Davidson added that talking points had been provided to the regions. Monica noted that monthly RTOC calls are another possible venue.
- Stiven encouraged the TSC members to disseminate information about the listening sessions to their networks.

Tribal Vignette: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Letter on Tribal Perspectives on the “America the Beautiful” Initiative, Shasta Gaughen, Pala Band of Mission Indians

- The [Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful](#) report recommends a 10-year locally led campaign to conserve and restore 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.
- The “America the Beautiful” Initiative is relevant to the TSC because it contains a science component and will have a critical impact on tribal TEK and science, especially because tribes know what is important to them in terms of conservation.

- ACHP held a series of tribal listening sessions that discussed the eight core principles of the “America the Beautiful” Initiative:
 1. Pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation.
 2. Conserve America’s lands and waters for the benefit of all people.
 3. Support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts.
 4. Honor tribal sovereignty and support the priorities of tribal nations.
 5. Pursue conservation and restoration approaches that create jobs and support healthy communities.
 6. Honor private property rights and support the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners and fishers.
 7. Use science as a guide.
 8. Build on existing tools and strategies with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptive approaches.
- Regarding Principle 1, Shasta noted that it is important to tribes that they be included in collaborative approaches to conservation.
- In terms of Principle 4, although it is a positive step that tribal sovereignty is acknowledged, tribal sovereignty always should be honored without it having to be stated.
- As mentioned in Principle 6, private land rights are important, and so are tribal land rights.
- Tribal responses to the “America the Beautiful” Initiative heard during the listening sessions were developed into a report, which Monica will distribute to the TSC members.
- Shasta provided a brief summary of some of the tribal responses:
 - Natural landscapes are cultural landscapes (i.e., nature is not separate from people and must not be separated when developing conservation plans).
 - Conserving America’s lands should not equate with seeking to create “wilderness” (i.e., conservation efforts should not focus on keeping people out of areas because this sentiment is antithetical to tribes; tribal stewardship is what keeps lands healthy).
 - Defining what is meant by “conserving” lands and waters is critical, especially when cultural resources are deemed to be “conserved” (i.e., conservation efforts should not completely ban hunting, fishing and gathering, which would keep tribes from their subsistence and cultural practices).
 - Tribal and Native Hawaiian voices should be elevated in discussions regarding cultural resources and the “America the Beautiful” Initiative.
 - The unique needs and traditional knowledge of tribes and Native Hawaiians should be considered by federal agencies in conserving and managing federal lands and waters and the cultural resources that they contain.
 - Increased conservation of America’s lands and waters could assist in protecting archaeological sites, which are being destroyed by climate change at an alarming rate.
 - Organizations that address cultural resources through conservation-based models could be potential participants in the “America the Beautiful” Initiative, and tribes by their very nature are cultural resource and historic preservation organizations.
- Karen Hamernik asked whether TEK has been used to address wildfire issues. Shasta responded that TEK has been used in California to combat the mismanagement of forests that contribute to wildfires. Tribes are returning to traditional burning practices and low, slow burns in appropriate conditions.

- Brenda agreed that the science and tribal aspects of the “America the Beautiful” Initiative are important for the TSC. She asked whether tribes had provided input on the restoration aspect of the Initiative. Shasta replied that the ACHP report focused on conservation because this is the activity that tribes are most concerned about. If TEK and traditional land stewardship practices are restored, then the health of many of the ecosystems will be restored. Co-management and co-stewardship of conserved lands can be performed by tribes. Tribes also can be advocates of the Landback Movement, which calls for giving land back to tribes to manage as they have in the past; this will allow the ecosystems to be restored with appropriate human intervention for the health of the landscape.
- Neil thought that it would be interesting to consider EPA’s carbon modeling as it relates to Indigenous peoples. Tribes manage some of the largest carbon sinks on the planet as a result of biodiversity and conservation on Indigenous-managed lands.

TSC Business

- The TSC discussed potential plans for the TSC Spring 2022 Business Meeting.
 - Once EPA begins to approve travel, the current TSC contract has the resources for up to two face-to-face meetings in 2022.
 - The three TSC Virtual Science Meetings have been successful.
 - Serving on the Agenda Development Team is a wonderful opportunity to foster camaraderie and ensure that the agenda is of tribal interest. Monica, Kristen LeBaron and the TSC Co-Chairs serve on each meeting’s team, with equal representation from each Caucus filling out the rest of the membership.
 - The Tribal Caucus is eager to meet at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians once in-person meetings are approved.
- The TSC discussed a concrete product for the ongoing Indigenous research methodologies effort.
 - The Region 9 product could provide guidance and insight about the type of white paper that the TSC should develop. Monica will send the TSC members the TSC’s 2011 white papers on TEK and climate change as an example of past TSC white papers.
 - The previous TSC white paper on TEK could help inform a meta-analysis on TEK and decision-making. Perhaps the 2011 TEK white paper could be updated and made current with resources that have been published since that white paper was developed.
 - The TSC could contact the earliest speakers who informed the TSC about Indigenous research methodologies for additional perspectives or to review an eventual TSC product.
 - One of the measures of success identified in the 2011 TEK white paper is an increased number of TEK policies developed by American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages. This is directly related to Region 9’s effort to determine which tribes have developed these protocols and policies. The TSC could examine how many tribes and villages have TEK policies in place in advance of the federal mandate to use TEK in federal processes because not all tribes and villages are ready to share TEK for environmental decision-making. This is of critical importance for agencies to know, and the TSC could take a primary role in this education.

Announcements

- The Pala Band of Mission Indians is hosting Region 9's annual conference October 25–27 at Lake Tahoe. Monica commented that ORD would like to engage tribes at these types of events.
- The Region 5 RTOC and Tribal Environmental Program Management meetings will be held virtually the week of March 14. The agenda still is in development.
- The Tribal PFAS Working Group has developed its 2022 priorities document. Page can present about the priorities during the TSC's February call.
- Ted Coopwood suggested that Gillian Mittelstaedt, Tulalip Tribes of Washington, present to the TSC about the tribe's tribal program for healthy homes, which is addressing asthma in tribal children.
- Quality assurance virtual training for states, tribes and territories will be held February 8–10.
- The Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee is developing its priorities document, including the topics of emergency response, Brownfields, solid waste and underground storage tanks. TSC members are invited to provide comments to Page.
- The trees in Neil's area are ready to give up their sap, which is a positive event no matter what is going on in the human world.

Next conference call: February 28, 2:00–3:30 p.m. EST